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VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU

AGAINST THE ATHEISTS;

OR,

ESSAYS AND DETACHED PASSAGES FROM THOSE WRITERS,

IN RELATION TO

THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By J. AKERLY.

* * * Jovis omnia plena.—Virgil, (*Bucol. Ecl. III.*)

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VOLTAIRE.

FROM "IL FAUT PRENDRE UN PARTI"—WE MUST CHOOSE OUR SIDE.

I do not allude to choosing sides between Russia and Turkey, for those countries will make peace sooner or later, without any interference of mine:

Nor is the question whether we shall declare ourselves in favor of a British party against some other party, for both will soon disappear and make way for new ones:

Nor do I propose to choose between the Christians of the Greek Church, the Arminians, the Eutychians, the Jacobites, the Christians denominated Papists, the Lutherans,

the Calvinists, the Anglicans, the Primitives styled Quakers, the Anabaptists, the Jansenists, the Molinists, the Socinians, the Pietists, and so many other *ists*. I desire to keep on good terms with all these gentlemen when I meet them, and to enter into no dispute with them; for there is not one among them all who, if he should have occasion to divide a guinea with me, would not perfectly understand how much was due him, or who would be willing to lose an *obolus* for the salvation of my soul or of his.

I shall not *take sides* between the old and new parliaments of France, for a few years hence we shall hear no more of either:

Nor between the ancients and the moderns, for that is a dispute which will never be settled:

Nor between the Jansenists and the Molinists, for they exist no longer, and five or six thousand volumes of their controversial works have become, thank God, as useless as the works of Saint Ephraim:

Nor between the French and Italian comic operas, for that is a matter of taste:

But that to which I refer is a trifling little question, viz.,—WHETHER THERE IS A GOD;—and this is what I am about to examine with great seriousness and good faith, for the subject is interesting to me and you too.

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION.

Every thing is in motion; every thing in nature acts and reacts.

Our sun turns on its axis with a rapidity which amazes us, and other suns turn likewise, while an innumerable multitude of planets revolve in their orbits around them. The blood circulates more than twenty times an hour in the lowest of our animals. A straw, borne by the wind, tends by its nature to the centre of the earth, as the earth is attracted by the sun, and the sun by it. The everlasting flux and reflux of the ocean is attributable to the same laws. It is in pur-

suance of the same laws that the vapors which form our atmosphere escape continually from the earth and fall again in the shape of dew, rain, hail, snow, and thunderstorms.

All is action; even death is active. The bodies of the dead are decomposed, transform themselves into vegetables, and afford nourishment for the living, who, in their turn, nourish others in the same manner.

What is the principle of this universal action?

That principle must be ONE. The constant uniformity discoverable in the laws which regulate the revolutions of the heavenly bodies and in the motion of our globe, and which is found to prevail also in every species and genus of animals, vegetables, and minerals, indicates *one* mover only. If there were two, they would be either different from each other, or hostile to each other, or similar to each other. Were they different, there would be no mutual adaptation in the

works of nature. Were they hostile, all things would destroy each other. If they are similar, it is as if there were but one: there is, in that case, one more than is required.

I am confirmed in the belief that there is but a single principle, a single mover, the moment I direct my attention to the unchanging and uniform laws pervading all nature.

The same gravitation penetrates into all the heavenly bodies, and impels them toward each other, not in proportion to their extent of surface (for that might result from the influence of a fluid), but in proportion to their mass or quantity of matter.

The squares of the periodic times of the planets are to each other in the same proportion as the cubes of their distances from the sun; and this, let me remark in passing, establishes what Plato had divined (I know not how), that the world is the work of the *Everlasting Geometer.*

The rays of light are reflected and refracted through the whole extent of the universe. All mathematical truths must be such in the star Sirius, as much as in our little dwelling-place.

If I turn my eyes upon the animal kingdom, I perceive that all quadrupeds and all bipeds without wings perpetuate their species by the same copulation, and that all their females are viviparous.

The females of all birds are oviparous.

All the species of the same genus propagate in the same manner and subsist on the same food.

Plants of the same genus have the same fundamental properties.

Assuredly the oak and the hazel have never contracted with each other that they would be reproduced and grow in the same way, any more than the planets, Mars and Saturn, have agreed with each other to be governed by the same laws.

Then there exists one universal and pow-

erful Intelligence, which always acts by unvarying laws.

No one, on seeing an armillary sphere, a painted landscape, drawings in which animals are represented, or anatomical preparations of colored wax, doubts that they are the productions of skilful artists. Can it be that these *copies* imply an intelligent maker, and that the *originals* do nothing of the kind? This of itself appears to me the most convincing demonstration of the existence of a God, and I cannot conceive in what way it can be answered.

OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION AS NECESSARY AND ETERNAL.

This one mover is very *powerful*, otherwise he could not regulate so vast and complicated a machine.

He is very *intelligent*, since we, who are intelligent, can produce nothing equal to the least of the springs of this machine.

He is a *necessary* being, inasmuch as the machine could not exist, but for him.

He is *eternal*, for he cannot have sprung from nonentity, which being nothing can produce nothing; and as soon as *something* exists, it is clear that something has existed from all eternity. This sublime truth has now become trite. Such has been the progress of the human mind in our times, notwithstanding the efforts our teachers of ignorance have put forth during so many ages to degrade us.

WHERE IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE? IS IT INFINITE?

When the animal called a man demonstrates to me a geometrical proposition, or when he raises a weight, I do not see the first principle of his intelligence and his motions. Still I believe that there is one within him, inferior being as he is. I cannot discover whether this first principle is in his heart, or his head, or his blood, or his whole

body. In the same manner I infer that there is a first principle in nature, and I see that it is impossible that that principle should not be everlasting. But *where* is it?

If it animates all that IS, it must *be in* all that IS. This seems unquestionable. It is in all that exists, as motion is in all the body of an animal, if I may be permitted to make use of so inadequate a comparison.

But if it is in what exists, can it be in what does not exist? Is the universe infinite? So we are told; but who can prove it?

* * * * * *

I know no reason why God should be infinite. His nature, I apprehend, is to be wherever there is any thing; but why and how should existing things be infinite? Newton has proved the possibility of a vacuum, which till then had only been supposed. If there is vacuity in nature, there can be vacuity beyond the limits of nature. What necessity is there that beings should have

infinite extension? What *is* infinite extension? There can be no such thing, any more than any number is infinite. There is no number and no degree of extension to which additions cannot be made. On this point the opinions of Cudworth are more correct than those of Clarke.

God, says Clarke, is present every where. Yes, doubtless, every where where any thing is, but not where there is nothing at all. *To be present to nothing* seems to me a contradiction, an absurdity. I am forced to admit eternity, but I am not forced to admit that there is such a thing as infinity.

In fine, what matters it to me, whether space be a real being or a mere conception of my understanding? What matters it, whether the necessary, intelligent, powerful, eternal, all-creating Being be or be not in that imaginary space? In either case, am I the less his work? Am I the less dependent upon him? Is he the less my master? I perceive this master of the universe with

the eyes of my understanding; but I cannot perceive him beyond the bounds of the universe.

The dispute, whether infinite space be a real being or not, still continues. I am not willing to found my opinion on so unsafe a basis—on a controversy worthy of the schoolmen; nor am I willing to make God's throne rest in imaginary space.

To compare once more small things which seem great to us, with what is great in reality, let us suppose that an alguazil at Madrid should endeavor to convince one of his Castilian neighbors that the king of Spain is master of the sea which lies north of California, and should contend that whoever doubts this is guilty of high treason. The Castilian might answer, "I do not even know that there is any sea on the other side of California; and it is of little importance to me whether there be or not, so long as I have the means of living at Madrid. No discovery of that sea is required to teach me

that I am under obligation to be faithful to the king, my master, on the banks of the Mançanares. Whether there be or be not any ships beyond Hudson's bay, his right to command me here remains unchanged. I feel my dependence on him at Madrid, because I know that he is the master of the city."

So, too, we are dependent on the Great Being, not because he is present out of the world, but because he is present *in* it.

I have only to entreat the forgiveness of the Ruler of Nature for having compared him to a frail man, that I might the better illustrate my meaning.

THAT THE FIRST PRINCIPLE, THE ETERNAL BEING, ARRANGED ALL VOLUNTARILY.

It is manifest that the Supreme, Necessary, and Active Intelligence has a *will*, and that he has ordered all things because he has so willed. For how could he act and form

every thing without willing? He would be, on that supposition, a mere machine, and that machine would imply another first principle—another mover. We should still have to recur to some primary being endowed with intelligence. We exercise volition, we act, we construct, machines in pursuance of our will; and so the great and mighty *Demiourgos** created all because he so willed.

Spinoza himself recognizes in nature an intelligent and necessary power. But an intelligence destitute of *will* would be an absurdity, for it would serve no end and would effect nothing; the will to effect any thing being wanting. Consequently, the great and necessary Being has willed all that he has done.

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* Demiourgos, *workman, maker.* It was often applied to the Deity by the Greek philosophers, as: * * * *Ἀλλ' οὕτω γε σκοπουμένῳ πάνυ ἔοικε ταῦτα σοφοῦ τινὸς δημιουργοῦ καὶ φιλοζώου τεχνήματι.*—Xenophon, (*Mem. Soc.*) *Θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς, κ. τ. λ.*—Plato, (*Timæus.*) *Μὴ τοίνυν τόν γε θεὸν ἀξιώσωμέν ποτε θνητῶν δημιουργῶν φαυλότερον, κ. τ. λ.*—Plato, (*De Legg.*) Translator.

I have before remarked that he created all *necessarily;* for if his works were not necessary, they would be useless. But does this necessity nullify his free will? Certainly not. I necessarily will that I may be happy. I do not will this the less because I *necessarily* will it; on the contrary, I will it only the more forcibly from the fact that my will is invincible.

Does this necessity deprive him of his free agency? Not at all. Free agency is nothing else than the power of acting. As then the Supreme Being is powerful in the highest degree, he is the freest of beings.

Thus, therefore, the great Artificer of the universe is shown to be necessary, eternal, intelligent, powerful, capable of volition, and free.

FROM "LE PHILOSOPHE IGNORANT."

ONE SUPREME ARTIFICER.

A LARGE part of mankind, seeing moral and physical evil spread throughout the globe, imagined that there were two powerful beings; one of whom wrought all the good, and the other all the evil.

If two such beings existed, they would exist *necessarily;* they would be everlasting and independent; they would also occupy all space, would exist, therefore, in the same place, and each would penetrate the other; which is absurd.

The notion of these two conflicting powers must have originated in the examples we witness on earth. We see around us some men that are mild, and others that are ferocious, useful animals and noxious ones, kind masters and tyrants. This suggested the idea of two hostile powers presiding over nature, which is but an Asiatic romance.

All nature exhibits unity of purpose. The laws of motion and gravity are invariable. It is impossible that two supreme artificers, entirely opposed to each other, should have followed the same laws. This argument is, in my judgment, sufficient of itself to overthrow the doctrine of the Manicheans, and there is no need of encountering them with cumbrous volumes.

There exists, therefore, a Power, unique, eternal, with whom every thing is connected, on whom every thing depends, but whose nature I am unable to comprehend.

FROM "TOUT EN DIEU."

Commentaire sur Malebranche.

GOD THE CAUSE OF ALL THINGS.

It is certain that we cannot give ourselves any sensation; we cannot even imagine any except such as we have experienced.

Though every academy in Europe should offer a prize for the invention of a new sense, the prize would never be awarded. We can do nothing purely of ourselves, whether there be an invisible and intangible being in our cerebellum or not. And it must be confessed, whatever system we adopt, that the Author of nature has bestowed upon us all that we have — organs, sensations—and ideas, which are the consequence of the latter.

As we are thus placed at his disposal, Malebranche, notwithstanding all his errors, was right in declaring, philosophically, that we are in God, and that we behold every thing in God. Saint Paul says the same thing in the language of theology, and Aratus and Cato in that of the moralists.

What, then, are we to understand by the expression, *behold every thing in God?**

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* The doctrine of Malebranche, if I rightly apprehend the opinions of that subtle metaphysician, is briefly as follows:

That ideas are not mere modes, properties, or attributes, but real entities:

Either these are unmeaning words, or they signify that all our ideas are from God.

That God must have created each of his works in pursuance of a previous idea in himself:

That there exists a kind of repository of ideas (or *étendue intelligible*, as Malebranche denominates it), which is embosomed, as it were, in God, and is a part of Him, and which contains the archetypes or model-ideas, not only of all that *is*, *has been*, or *will be*, but of all that *can be;*—of all things that are *possible:*

That when we look on external objects, we do not see the objects themselves, but the intimate union between the human soul and God enables us to perceive the *ideal exemplars* of those objects in that portion of God's substance which constitutes the *étendue intelligible;* and we may therefore be said to see God, and to see all things in God.

The following passage, which I translate from the work of Malebranche entitled *De la Recherche de la Vérité*, will perhaps exhibit his views more clearly. It is from the chapter, "*Que nous voyons toutes choses en Dieu.*"

"A great number of passages may be found in the writings of St. Augustine, by which he attempts to prove that we see God, even in this life, by the knowledge which we possess of eternal truths. Truth, he observes, is uncreated, immutable, immeasurable, everlasting, superior to all else. It is true by its own nature; its perfection is not derived from any thing; it renders created beings more perfect; and all spirits naturally endeavor to become acquainted with it. Nothing but God can possess all these perfections. Then Truth is God.

What is meant by *receiving ideas?* When we receive, we do not *create* them; then they are created by God, just as it is God, not we, who originates motion. All, therefore, is but the action of God upon his creatures.

"We see some of these immutable and eternal truths. Then we see God.

"Such is St. Augustine's mode of reasoning. My own is somewhat different, and I would not unfairly take advantage of the authority of so great a name to support my own views.

"My opinion, then, is that truths, far from being God himself, are not even substantive beings; and that this is the case even with those which are eternal, such as that twice two make four. For it is apparent that this truth consists merely in a relation of equality between 4 and twice 2. I say, therefore, that we see God, not as St. Augustine maintains, when we see these truths, but when we perceive the IDEAS of them, for the ideas are actual beings; while the *equality* between the ideas, which is the truth itself, is not a real being. When, for example, we measure a piece of cloth and say that it is three ells long, the cloth and the ells are real beings. But the *equality* between the three ells and the cloth is not a real being; it is a mere relation. When we say that twice 2 are 4, the ideas of the numbers are actual entities; but the equality between them is only a relation. Thus, according to my view, we see God when we perceive everlasting truths; not that these truths are God, but because the *ideas* on which they depend are in God," &c., &c.

TRANSLATOR.

GOD INSEPARABLE FROM ALL NATURE.

It must not thence be inferred that he remains in perpetual contact with his works by particular acts and exercises of volition. We are prone always to make God in our likeness. Sometimes we represent him as an absolute monarch issuing orders to the servants in his palace; sometimes as a workman attending to the wheels of his machine. But can the man who makes a right use of his reason, conceive of God as aught else than an ever active principle? If he was once a principle, he must be so every moment, for his nature cannot change. The comparison of the sun and its light to God and his productions is, no doubt, imperfect; but it furnishes an idea, however faint and defective, of an ever-subsisting cause and its ever-subsisting effects.

In short, it is merely as a parrot or an idiot that I utter the name of God, if I have not the idea of a cause which is necessary,

immeasurable, active, present to all its effects, in all places, and at all times.

I cannot here be met with the objections advanced against Spinoza. He was told that he had made a God at once intelligent and stupid, spirit and squash, wolf and lamb, who robbed and was robbed, murdered and was murdered; that his God was a perpetual contradiction. But I do not make the universe God. I hold that the universe is an emanation from him, and would observe (to recur again to the feeble comparison of which I have spoken), that a beam of light darted from the sun, and absorbed in the filthiest of sewers, does not leave the smallest stain upon the luminary from which it proceeds, nor does the sewer prevent the sun from vivifying all nature throughout our globe.

It may be objected, however, that the beam, being an emanation from the sun, comes from its very substance; and that if God's works are emanations from him, they

are parts of him. Hence I should fear to convey a false idea of God, by appearing to consider him as composed of parts—and those, too, unconnected parts—parts hostile to each other. On this point I repeat what I have already remarked, that my comparison is extremely imperfect, and that it serves only to furnish a faint image of what cannot be represented by images. I might say, moreover, that a sunbeam passing into the mire does not mingle with the latter, but preserves its invisible essence. Yet it is better to confess that even the purest light is not an adequate emblem of the Deity. Light emanates from the sun, and all things emanate from God. We know not how it is; but, I repeat, we cannot conceive of God except as the necessary Being from whom all emanates. The multitude regard him as a despot who keeps bailiffs in his antechamber.

I consider all other images which have been employed to shadow forth this Princi-

ple — a Principle all-pervading, necessarily self-existent, necessarily active throughout immeasurable extension—as still more incorrect than the comparison drawn from the sun and his rays. He has been described as riding the winds, borne on the clouds, surrounded with thunders and lightnings, holding converse with the elements, swelling the waves of the ocean. All this is but the expression of our littleness. It is, in truth, highly ridiculous to place in the midst of a fog, half a league from our petty globe, the everlasting Principle of all the millions of globes revolving in immensity. Our lightnings and thunders, which are seen and heard in a circuit of not more than four or five leagues at farthest, are but insignificant effects which are lost in the great whole; and this great whole is what we ought to bear in mind when speaking of God.

It must be the same power which passes from our planetary system to the other planetary systems thousands and thousands of

times more remote from us than our globe is from Saturn. The stars are all governed by the same eternal laws, for if the centripetal and centrifugal forces influence our world, they influence the neighbouring one; and so on, throughout the universe. The light of Sirius must be the same with that of our sun; it must possess the same degree of tenuity, the same velocity, the same force; it must likewise be emitted on all sides in right lines; and its intensity, also, must vary inversely as the square of the distance.

As the light of the fixed stars, which are so many suns, reaches us in a given time; so in reciprocation, that of our sun reaches them in a given time. As the rays and beams of our sun are subject to refraction, so, unquestionably, the rays of the other suns, darted in like manner upon their attending planets, are refracted in precisely the same mode, if they strike the same *media*.

As this refraction is necessary to sight, these planets must contain beings possessing

the faculty of seeing. It is not probable that so excellent a way of turning light to account is left unemployed in the other globes. The instrument being there, we may reasonably suppose that it is used. Let us always set out with these two principles—that nothing is useless, and that the great laws of nature are every where the same—and it will follow that the innumerable suns kindled in the immensity of space dispense light to innumerable planets; that the rays have the same properties as on our little earth; and that animals enjoy the benefit of them. Of all beings and of all the forms in which the Great Being manifests himself, light is that which gives us the most enlarged idea of the Divinity, far as it is from fully representing him.

In truth, when we have surveyed the anatomical structure of the animals of our globe, we know not whether the inhabitants of the other globes possess similar organs: when

we have made ourselves acquainted with the weight, elasticity, and uses of our atmosphere, we are ignorant whether the orbs revolving around Sirius or Aldebaran are encompassed with air resembling ours: our briny ocean does not prove that there are oceans in the other planets: but LIGHT is every where. Our nights are illuminated by a host of suns. It is by light that from a corner of this little ball on which man crawls, a perpetual correspondence is kept up between all those worlds and us. Saturn looks upon us, and we upon Saturn. Sirius, which we behold, may also behold us, and certainly does behold our sun, although there intervenes between the two a distance such that a cannon ball, moving at the rate of twelve hundred yards in a second, could not traverse it in a hundred and four billions of years.

Light is, in reality, a swift messenger flying through the great whole, from world to world. It has some of the properties of

matter and some that are higher than those; and if any thing can afford some faint, incipient idea, some imperfect apprehension of God, it is LIGHT, which, like him, is everywhere, and, like him, operates everywhere.

FROM THE "HOMÉLIES."

(*Première Homélie.*)

* * * DESTROY men's belief in an avenging and remunerating Deity, and Sylla and Marius bathe with delight in the blood of their fellow-citizens; the cruelties of Augustus, Antonius and Lepidus, surpass the atrocities of Sylla; Nero in cold blood causes his mother to be put to death. It is certain that the fear of an avenging God had then disappeared among the Romans. (Atheism was prevalent, and it would not be difficult to prove from history that atheism may sometimes produce as much evil as the most barbarous superstitions.)

Think you that Pope Alexander VI. believed there was a God, when, to promote the interests of his son, the offspring of incest, he had recourse in turn to treachery, open violence, the stiletto, the halter, and poison; and when, in mockery of the superstitious weakness of those whom he assassinated, he gave them absolution and indulgences in the midst of the convulsions of death? Certainly, these horrible barbarities upon men were insults to the Divinity whom he derided. Let us all confess that in reading the history of this monster and his detestable son, we experience a wish that they may be punished. The idea of an avenging God is necessary therefore.

It may and does too often happen that, though convinced of God's justice, men give way to the fury of their passions. They are then in a state of intoxication. Remorse does not come upon them until reason has resumed her authority, but *then* it torments the guilty. The atheist may feel, instead

of remorse, that secret and gloomy horror which accompanies the commission of great crimes. The condition of his soul is harassing and unhappy. A man who is stained with blood can no longer taste the sweets of society; his spirit becomes ruffianly, and enjoys none of the delights of life; he is frantic as a madman;—but he does not repent. He has no fear of being called to an account for the victims he has made. He will always be wicked, and will become hardened in ferocity.

On the contrary, the man who believes in God will recover from his excitement. He can be violent but for a moment, while the atheist is a monster all his life. Why? Because there is a check which restrains the former, while the latter has nothing to control him.

We do not read that the Archbishop of Troll, who caused all the magistrates of Stockholm to be murdered before his eyes, ever condescended even to pretend to atone

for his crime by the slightest penitence. An atheist, provided he be sure of impunity so far as man is concerned, reasons and acts consistently in being dishonest, ungrateful, a slanderer, a robber, and a murderer. For if there is no God, this monster is his own god, and sacrifices to his purposes whatever he desires and whatever stands as an obstacle in his path. The most moving entreaties, the most cogent arguments have no more effect upon him than on a wolf thirsting for blood.

When the two Medici were assassinated by order of Pope Sixtus IV., in a church, at the instant when the god adored by the multitude was raised that they might look upon him, the pope, tranquil in his palace, had nothing to fear, whether the plot should succeed or miscarry. He well knew that the Florentines would never dare avenge themselves; that he could excommunicate them at his ease, and that they would kneel and ask his forgiveness for having ventured to complain.

It is altogether probable that all the powerful men who have passed their lives in that round of crimes which fools denominate *strokes of policy*, *revolutionary remedies*, *art of governing*, &c., have been atheists. * *

FROM THE "HONNÊTETÉS LITTÉRAIRES."

(*Vingt-septième Honnêteté.*)

I HAVE always been convinced that atheism cannot do any good, and may do very great harm. I have pointed out the infinite difference between the sages who have written against superstition and the madmen who have written against God. There is neither philosophy nor morality in any system of atheism.

In none do I see any philosophy: for, in truth, is it *reasoning* to recognize the evidences of genius in one of the spheres of Ar-

chimedes or Posidonius, and in one of those orreries that are sold in England, and yet to recognize no such evidences in the workmanship of the universe?—to admire the copy, and yet persist in refusing to see any intelligence in the original from which the copy is taken? Is not this more absurd than if one were to say that the *engravings* from Raphael's paintings were made by an intelligent artist, but that the *paintings* made themselves!

* * * * * *

FROM "DIEU ET LES HOMMES."

What other restraint could be laid on cupidity and on secret and unpunished transgressions than the idea of an eternal master who sees us, and will judge even our most hidden thoughts? I know not who was the first to teach men this doctrine. If I did,

and were sure that he did not go farther and corrupt the medicine which he offered to mankind, I would erect an altar in his honor.

FROM THE "DICTIONNAIRE PHILOSOPHIQUE."

(*Article "Dieu."*)

For my part, in nature as in art, I see nothing but final causes; and I as much believe that apple-trees were made for the purpose of bearing apples, as that watches are made for the purpose of showing the time of day.

FROM A LETTER TO M. MARTIN KAHLE.

I shall always be of the opinion that a clock proves a clock-maker, and that the universe proves a God.

FROM THE "HISTOIRE DE JENNI."

* * * ITALY, in the fifteenth century, was full of atheists—and what was the consequence? Cases of poisoning were as common as invitations to supper; and there was no more hesitation in plunging a stiletto into the heart of one's friend than in embracing him. There were teachers of crime, just as there are now teachers of music or mathematics. * * *

FROM THE SAME.

Birton—With you, I will call that intelligent and powerful Principle which animates all nature, God. But has he deigned to make himself known to us?

Friend—Yes, in his works.

Birton—Has he dictated to us his laws? Has he spoken to us?

Friend—Yes, by the voice of our conscience. Is it not the fact that, if you had killed your father and mother, your conscience would harrow up your soul with remorse as terrible as it would be involuntary? Is not this truth felt and admitted by the whole world? Now let us descend to crimes of less magnitude. Is there one which does not alarm you at the first glance—which does not make you turn pale, the first time that you commit it—or which does not leave within you the sting of repentance?

* * * * * * *

God, by addressing himself to your heart, has expressly commanded you never to debase yourself by doing what is *manifestly* criminal. And as to all those *equivocal* acts which some condemn and others justify, what better rule can we adopt than to adhere to that great maxim of the first of the Zoroasters, which has been so much dwelt upon in our time by a French author: "*When you are uncertain whether the act*

which you contemplate be good or bad, abstain from it."

FROM THE "TRAITÉ DE MÉTAPHYSIQUE."

I PROPOSE to institute an inquiry into the nature of the thinking faculty in the different species of men; to examine whence we derive our ideas; whether we have a soul distinct from the body; whether the soul is immortal; whether it is free; whether it has virtues and vices, &c. But as the greater part of these questions are connected with that of the existence or non-existence of God, it seems proper to begin by endeavoring to fathom the abyss of this great subject. Now, more than ever, let us divest ourselves of all passion and prejudice, and see in good faith what solution we can obtain by our reason, of the inquiry, *Is there, or is there not, a God?*

I observe, in the first place, that there are nations who have no knowledge of a creating Deity. These people are barbarous, it is true, and few in number; but still they are men: and if the knowledge of God's existence were a necessary attribute of human nature, the savage Hottentots would have as sublime an idea of a supreme being as we ourselves. Moreover, among civilized nations, children have not the least conception of a God. It is difficult to make them comprehend the idea; they often pronounce the word *God* all their lives without attaching to it any definite meaning. We find, also, that men differ as much in their notions of God as in their religions and laws. Hence I cannot refrain from saying to myself, "Is it possible that the knowledge of God, our creator, our preserver, our all, is less necessary to man than his corporeal members—than a nose and the five fingers of each hand, for example? Every man comes into the world with a nose and five fingers, but

not one possesses at birth any knowledge of God. Whether it be a subject for regret or not, the fact is undeniable."

Let us examine whether we ultimately acquire this knowledge in the same way as we attain to an acquaintance with mathematical principles, and with some metaphysical ideas. In so important an inquiry, what more judicious course can we pursue than to weigh whatever can be urged on either side, and adopt the conclusion which shall appear to us to be most in conformity with our reason?

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

There are two modes of arriving at the idea of a being who presides over the universe. The one which to ordinary minds is the most natural and complete, is to direct the attention not only to the order which reigns in the universe, but also to the end

with an eye to which every thing appears to have been created. Many a huge volume has been written on this subject, yet the contents of them all may be reduced to the following reasoning:

When I see a watch, the hand of which marks the hours, I conclude that an intelligent being arranged the springs of this piece of mechanism *with a view to* the indication of the hours by the hand. So, when I see the *springs* of the human body, I conclude that an intelligent being arranged these organs to be received and nourished nine months in the womb; that eyes were furnished for the purpose of seeing; hands, that objects might be grasped, &c. But from this consideration alone, I can only infer the probability that an intelligent and superior being has skilfully *prepared* and *fashioned* matter. I cannot conclude from it alone that this being *created* matter out of nothing, or that he is infinite in every respect. I strive in vain to trace in my mind any connec-

tion between the following ideas: "It is probable that I am the creature of a being more powerful than myself; hence that being has existed from all eternity; hence he created every thing; hence he is infinite, &c." I cannot perceive that the premises above stated lead directly to the conclusions there drawn from them. I perceive only that there is something which is more powerful than myself, but nothing farther.

The other mode of reasoning to which I adverted in the opening of my remarks, is more metaphysical and less easy to be apprehended by minds wanting in acute perceptions, but it opens a far wider field of knowledge. It is, in brief, as follows:

I exist; then something exists. If something exists, something has existed from all eternity; for what exists either is self-existent or has had its existence communicated to it by another being. If what exists is self-existent, it exists *necessarily;* it always has existed necessarily; and it is God. If

what exists has had existence communicated to it from another being, and that other has derived *its* existence from a third, the last being must necessarily be God. For it is not conceivable that one being can bestow existence on another, unless the former possesses creative power; and to say that a thing received not merely its form, but its existence from a second thing, and that this second thing received its existence from a third; the third from a fourth, and so on in infinite succession, is to utter an absurdity, inasmuch as all these beings would exist without any cause for their existence. Taken all in the mass, they would have no external cause; taken each by itself, they would have no internal cause: that is to say, taken all together, they would owe their existence to nothing; taken singly, none of them would be self-existent: then it follows that none of them exists *necessarily*.

I am then obliged to confess that there is a being necessarily and from all eternity

self-existent, and that this being is the source of all others. Hence it results that he is infinite in duration, immensity, and power—for what restraint is there upon him?

But, it may be said, the material world is the very being we are searching after. Let us inquire in all sincerity whether that be probable.

If the material world exists of itself, by absolute necessity, it would imply a contradiction in terms to suppose that the smallest part of the universe could be different in any particular from what it is; for if that part exists at the present moment by absolute *necessity*, the very word excludes every other mode of being. Now, the table on which I write, the pen that I use, certainly have not always been what they now are; the thoughts which I commit to paper did not exist a moment ago, and consequently they do not *necessarily* exist. But if each part does not exist by absolute necessity, it is impossible

that the whole should be self-existent. I produce a motion; then the motion did not exist before; then motion is not essential to matter; then the motion of matter comes from something else than itself; then there is a God by whom motion is impressed upon it. So, likewise, *intelligence* is not essential to matter, for a rock or a heap of wheat does not think. Whence, then, do those portions of matter which do think and feel derive the faculty of thinking and feeling? It cannot be from themselves, for they feel in spite of themselves; it cannot be from matter in general, because thought and sensation are not essential to matter. They must have received these properties, then, at the hand of a being, who is supreme, intelligent, infinite, and the primary cause of all other beings.

These, in a few words, are the evidences of the existence of a God, and are the out-

line of many volumes—an outline which the reader can fill up at his own convenience.

Below are given, with equal brevity, the objections which may be urged against this doctrine.

OBJECTIONS TO THE BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

First Objection.

If the material world is not itself God, it was created by him; or (if that be preferred) he delegated the power to create it to some other being, which amounts to the same thing. In making this world he either created it out of nonentity or out of his own divine substance. He cannot have formed it out of nonentity, for that is nothing at all; he cannot have formed it from himself, since in that case, the world would be a part of the divine essence: consequently, I cannot have any idea of creation, and hence I cannot admit that creation took place.

Second Objection.

If God made the world, he must have done so either by necessity or of his own free will.

If by necessity, it must have always been made, for the same necessity existed from all eternity; and on that supposition the world would be eternal and yet created—which involves contradiction.

If God created it freely and of his own choice merely, without any anterior reason for so doing, this would also involve a contradiction—for the supposition that a being infinitely wise created all things without any motive, and that a being infinitely powerful passed an eternity without making the least use of his power, is inconsistent with itself.

Third Objection.

If it appears to the greater part of mankind that an intelligent being has stamped the impress of wisdom upon all nature, so

that every thing seems to have been made for some specific end; it is yet more true that in the eyes of philosophers all the operations of nature are carried on by the eternal, independent, and unchangeable laws of mathematics; the structure and duration of the human frame, for example, being results of the equilibrium of fluids and the force of levers. The more we discover of the mechanism of the universe, the more do we find it arranged, from the heavenly bodies to the worm, in conformity with mathematical laws. We are authorized, therefore, to conclude that these laws, operating by their own nature, have necessarily produced effects which are erroneously ascribed to the arbitrary determination of an intelligent power. A field, for instance, produces grass because such is the nature of its soil when moistened by the rain, and not because there are horses that require hay and oats for their subsistence: and the same reasoning may be applied to other things.

Fourth Objection.

If the arrangement of the parts of the universe and all that takes place among beings capable of thought and sensation prove the existence of a creator and ruler, still more do they prove that he is a cruel being; for if we admit the doctrine of final causes we shall be obliged to say that God, the infinitely wise and infinitely good, conferred life on all his creatures in order that they might devour each other. In truth, when we turn our eyes upon the animal creation, we find that every species has an irresistible instinct prompting it to destroy some other species. We might pass our whole lives in addressing reproaches to the Divinity on account of the misery suffered by man alone. It is in vain to tell us that God's wisdom and goodness are not of the same character as ours. Such an argument will have no weight with multitudes of persons, who will reply that they can only judge of what is just by the

idea of justice which God is supposed to have given them; that we can only measure with the measure we have; and that it would be as impossible for us not to consider a being barbarous who should act like a barbarous man, as it is for us to avoid thinking that any thing is six feet high when we have applied to it a measure two yards in length, and found that the measure and the thing measured appear to correspond.

"If we are told," say they, "that our measure is not correct, we are told what apparently contradicts itself; for it is God himself who has given us this incorrect idea, and so God must have created us only to deceive us. Now it is a manifest inconsistency to assert that a being who is all perfection forces his creatures into error; error being, properly speaking, the only imperfection." Moreover, the materialists will say at last, "There are fewer absurdities in atheism than in deism; for in the former we must, indeed, conceive the world we behold to be

eternal and infinite—but in the latter we must suppose that another being is so, and to this supposition we must add that of the creation of the world, of which we can have no idea." They will contend, therefore, that there are fewer difficulties in not believing in God than in believing.

REPLY TO THE FOREGOING OBJECTIONS.

The arguments against the creation have only the effect of showing that it is impossible for us to conceive of it—that is to say, to conceive of the *manner* in which it took place. But they do not show that it was impossible in itself; for before the impossibility of the creation can be proved, it is necessary to demonstrate the impossibility of the existence of God. Far, however, from proving that impossibility, we are compelled to admit the impossibility of his non-existence. The argument that there must exist, externally to us, a being infinite, eternal, immeasu-

rable, omnipotent, free, intelligent, and the darkness by which this light is accompanied, serve only to make it manifest that there is such a light; for by the very fact that the existence of an infinite being is established, the impossibility of his being comprehended by a finite being is also established.

In my opinion, they who undertake to deny the necessity of a self-existent being, and they who maintain that matter is such a being, can do nothing more than frame sophisms and put forth absurdities. His existence is proved, but the determination and discussion of his *attributes* is altogether a different matter.

The masters of the art of reasoning, the Lockes and Clarkes, tell us, "This being must be intelligent; for he who has formed all that IS must possess all the perfections which he has imparted to what he has formed, otherwise the effect would be more perfect than its cause:" or, in other words, "There would be in the effect a perfection

produced by nothing — which is palpably absurd. Since, then, intelligent beings exist, and since matter could not bestow on itself the faculty of thought, the self-existent being, God, must be an intelligent being."

But might not this argument be retorted thus: "God must be matter, because material beings exist; for otherwise matter would have been produced by nothing, and a cause would have produced an effect the elements of which were not contained in that cause." Attempts have been made to elude this argument by slipping in the word *perfection.* Clarke seems to have anticipated that the objection might be advanced against him; but he has not ventured to state it in its full force. He presents only the following: "It will be said that God has imparted to matter divisibility and form, though he is himself without form and indivisible." And to this he opposes the very obvious and conclusive answer that form and divisibility are negative qualities and limitations; and that,

though a cause cannot communicate to its effect any perfection which it does not itself possess, yet the effect may and must necessarily have *limitations* and *imperfections* which are not found in the cause. But how would Clarke have replied to an opponent who should have urged such reasoning as the following: "Matter is not a negative thing, a limitation, an imperfection. It is something real and positive, which has its attributes as much as spirit. Now how can God have produced a material being, if he, God, is not material?" You are thus driven to confess either that a cause can communicate something positive of which it is itself destitute, or that matter has no cause for its existence; or else to contend that matter is a pure negation and limitation: or, if these three positions are considered untenable, you are constrained to admit that the existence of intelligent beings no more proves that the self-existent being is intelligent, than the existence of material beings proves

that the self-existent being is material; for the cases are completely parallel. The same thing may be said of motion. The use of the word *perfection* is here clearly an abuse. Who will undertake to assert that matter is an imperfection and thought a perfection? No one, I apprehend, will assume thus to decide in respect to the essence of things. Besides, what is the meaning of *perfection?* Does it signify perfection relatively to God, or relatively to us?

I know it may be said that this opinion would lead to the system of Spinoza. I might reply that I cannot help it, and that if my reasoning be sound, it cannot be rendered unsound by any conclusion deduced from it. Still, nothing would be more unwarranted than any such deduction; for what is said above tends merely to show that our intelligence no more resembles God's intelligence, than the mode in which we occupy a certain portion of space resembles the manner in which space is filled by God. God

is not like the causes with which we are conversant. He was able to create spirit and matter, though himself neither spirit nor matter. Neither of the two is an emanation from him, but both were created by him. I do not know, indeed, *quomodo*. I prefer stopping short to going astray. I am fully convinced of God's existence, but am equally convinced that I am not capable of comprehending his attributes and his essence.

The assertion that God could not create the world either necessarily or by his own free will, is but a sophism which falls to the ground the moment we have proved that there is a God and that the world is not God. The objection resolves itself into this: "I cannot understand why God should have created the universe at one time rather than at another, and therefore he cannot have created it." It is as if one were to say, "I cannot understand why such and such a man or such and such a horse did not exist a thousand years earlier, and therefore it is

not possible that they do exist." Moreover, God's free will is a reason sufficient to account for his creating the world at the time when it was created. If God IS, he is free; and he would not be so if he could only act when induced by a *sufficient reason*, and his own will were not such a reason. Besides, is this sufficient reason to be regarded as within him or without? On the latter hypothesis, he would not adopt his determinations freely; on the former, what is the sufficient reason but his own will?

The laws of mathematics are unchangeable, it is true, but it was not *necessary* that some particular laws should be selected in preference to others. It was not necessary that the earth should be placed where it is. No mathematical law can act of itself. None does act where there is no movement; and motion is not self-existent. We must have recourse, therefore, to a prime mover. I admit that the planets, placed at a certain distance from the sun, *must* pass through

their orbits in conformity with the laws which they *do* observe, and that their distance may even be regulated by the quantity of matter they contain. But can it be affirmed that it was necessary that there should be a fixed quantity of matter in each planet? —That there should be a fixed number of stars, which number could neither be increased nor diminished? And is it required by an absolute necessity inherent in the very nature of things, that there should be on the earth a fixed number of beings? Unquestionably not, for the number varies every day. All nature, then, from the remotest star to a blade of grass, must be subject to a prime mover.

As for the objection that the sustenance of cattle was not the essential object for which green fields were made, we have no right (even on the assumption that this is true) to infer that there is no final cause; but ought only to conclude that there are some final causes with which we are unac-

quainted. Here we are especially bound to reason with fairness, and not seek to deceive ourselves. When we meet with any thing which always has the same effect—which has that effect only—and which is composed of an infinity of organs, in which an infinity of movements takes place, all concurring to the same result—we cannot, I think, without secret unwillingness, deny a final cause. Such is the fact in regard to the germs of all vegetables and all animals. Does it not require some hardihood to affirm that all this has no relation to any end?

I grant that there is no demonstration, properly so called, that the stomach was intended as the instrument of digestion—just as there is no demonstration that the sun shines. But the materialists, too, are far from being able to demonstrate that the stomach was *not* designed to perform the function of digestion. I have only to ask that the decision as to which of these opinions is more likely to be correct, may be

made as impartially as the decisions to which we come in the ordinary transactions of life.

As to the charges of injustice and cruelty brought against God, I answer, first, that supposing moral evil to exist (though I believe the supposition that it does to be fallacious), it is no less impossible to explain it by the system of the materialists than by that in which a God is recognized. I reply, moreover, that we have no other ideas of justice than such as we have formed of every action which is useful to society and conformable to the laws established by us for the public welfare. Now these ideas respect only the relations between man and man, and the analogy does not hold good in reference to God. It is as absurd to say of God that he is just or unjust in this sense of the words, as to say that he is blue or square. It is nonsense, therefore, to charge it upon God as a reproach, that flies are eaten by spiders—that the life of men in general does not exceed eighty years—that they make a

bad use of their free agency by destroying one another—that they are liable to diseases —subject to cruel passions, &c., &c.—for surely we do not imagine that men and flies ought to be immortal. Before asserting that a thing is bad, we should examine whether any thing better could be substituted for it. We certainly cannot judge that a piece of machinery is imperfect, unless we have some idea of the perfection in which it is deficient; we cannot judge that the three sides of a triangle are unequal, if we have no idea of an equilateral triangle; we cannot say that a watch goes badly, unless we have a distinct idea of a certain number of equal spaces through which the hand of the watch must pass in equal times. But who can have an idea of the perfection, by its want of which the world, as now constituted, impeaches the divine wisdom?

There are difficulties in the doctrine that there is a God; but in the opposite doctrine there are downright absurdities. Of these

I propose to offer some examples by sketching a brief outline of what a materialist is obliged to believe.

NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES OF THE OPINIONS OF THE MATERIALISTS.

The materialists are compelled to maintain that the world exists necessarily and of itself; so that for them it would be a contradiction in terms to say that any particle of matter might not exist, or might exist otherwise than it does. They must hold that the material world includes in its own essence thought and feeling; for it cannot *acquire* them, since, in that case, it would receive them from nothing; and as the material world itself is supposed to be all that IS, thought and feeling could not exist apart from it. Then they must be inherent in matter, like extension, divisibility, and the

capacity of being moved. At the same time, our opponents must allow that there is but a very small number of the parts of the world, in which thought and feeling are found, though they have contended that both are essential to the whole: and also that these thoughts and feelings, though inherent, as they declare, in matter, perish every moment: or else it will be necessary for them to maintain that there is a Soul of the World, which diffuses itself throughout organized bodies; and on that hypothesis, this soul must be something else than the world. Thus, on what side soever we turn, we meet with nothing but chimeras which destroy each other.

The materialists must hold, also, that motion is essential to matter. Consequently, they are reduced to the necessity of affirming that it has never been possible and never will be possible for motion either to increase or decrease. They will be forced to declare that a hundred thousand men marching at

once and the discharge of a hundred pieces of artillery occasion no new motion in nature. They must assert, likewise, that there is no free agency, thereby loosening all the bonds that bind society together, and must believe in a fatalism quite as difficult to be comprehended as free agency, and which their own practice belies.

Let the candid reader, after maturely weighing the arguments for and against the existence of a creating Deity, now determine on which side the probability lies.

FROM THE "HENRIADE."

Amidst a blaze of flame-like light, which pure and changeless shone,
Was placed, ere time itself began, God's everlasting throne:
The heavens are spread beneath his feet; a thousand orbs proclaim,
Rolling in one unvarying round, their great Creator's name.

Goodness and Wisdom, joined with Power, compose—mysterious three
Together blended, yet distinct—the Triune Deity.*

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* The original is as follows:

Au milieu des clartés d'un feu pur et durable
Dieu mit avant les temps son trône inébranlable.
Le ciel est sous ses pieds; de mille astres divers
Le cours toujours réglé l'annonce à l'univers.
La puissance, l'amour, avec l'intelligence,
Unis et divisés composent son essence.

END OF EXTRACTS FROM VOLTAIRE.

ROUSSEAU.

ROUSSEAU.

FROM "ÉMILE."

(*Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard.*)

PART FIRST.

I exist, and have senses which exert an influence upon me. This is the first truth by which I am struck, and to which I cannot but assent. Is the consciousness of my existence a distinct feeling, or is it something at which I arrive by means of my sensations? This is my first doubt, and one which I am as yet incompetent to resolve. For, being continually affected by sensations, either directly or indirectly through the mem-

ory, how can I tell whether the conviction of my own individuality be something apart from those sensations and independent of them, or not?

My sensations must be internal, for they make me aware of my existence; but their cause must be external, or they would not affect me against my will, and without any ability on my part either to produce or prevent them. I am confident, therefore, that the sensations which are within me, and their cause or object which is not within me, cannot be one and the same thing.

Not only do I exist, then, but there exist other beings, namely, the objects of my sensations; and even though those objects be nothing but *ideas*, still they are not *myself*.

Now all the external objects with which I become acquainted by my senses and which act upon them, I call *matter;* and when I conceive of particles of matter combined so as to form individual beings, I call them *bodies*. Thus, all the disputes of the ideal-

ists and the materialists are unimportant to me; their distinctions in relation to the appearances and the realities of bodies are mere chimeras.

Here, therefore, I am as certain of the existence of the universe as I am of my own. I then reflect on the objects of my sensations, and, finding that I have the faculty of comparing them, I feel that I am endowed with an active power which I was not before conscious of possessing.

To perceive is to discover by sensation. To compare is to judge of the properties or proportions of things. There is a difference between *discovering things by sensation and judging of their properties or proportions.* By sensation objects present themselves before me, separately, one by one, and as nature offers them. By comparison, I put these objects in motion, transport them, so to speak, from their places, and set them one upon another, in order to ascertain their similarity or dissimilarity and the general relations in which they stand to each other. The ability

to attach a meaning to the word IS, constitutes in my opinion the distinctive characteristic of an active and intelligent being. In a being purely sensitive, I seek in vain for that intelligent faculty which brings objects together and then decides upon them. The nature of such a being does not seem to admit of the faculty. A being of this character may perceive every single object when unconnected with others, or even a whole composed of two—but destitute as it is, of the capacity of bringing them into contact with each other, it can never compare them, or determine their relative properties.

To see two things at the same time does not necessarily imply an examination of their relations or the formation of a conclusion as to the points in which they differ. Simply to perceive a number of separate things is not to count them. I may think at the same moment of a small stick and of a large one, without comparing them, without reflecting that one is inferior in size to the other—just

as I can look at my hand without considering how many fingers it has.* The ideas of comparison, represented by the expressions *greater than* and *less than*, as well as the ideas of number indicated by the words *one*, *two*, &c., certainly are not sensations, though they only occur to my mind when my sensations suggest them.

It has been said that the sensations of a sensitive being are distinguished from one another by the differences between them. This requires explanation. When the sensations are different, it is by their differences that the sensitive being distinguishes them; when they are similar, they are distinguished by their independence of each other. Otherwise, when two objects, which are equal to each other, produce simultaneous

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* M. de La Condamine (in his Travels) speaks of a people who could only count as far as three. Yet the individuals of whom the nation was composed must have often *perceived* the five fingers on each of their hands, though without knowing what was the number.

sensations, how would it be possible to distinguish them? The two things would inevitably be confounded, and be supposed to be one only, especially on the supposition that the sensations indicating extension have no extension themselves.

When the two sensations to be compared have been felt, their impression is made—each object has been rendered sensible to us—the two together are rendered sensible; but it does not follow from this that their relations to each other are so. If my conclusions in respect to these relations were mere sensations, and were derived solely from the objects, they would never deceive me, since it can never be untrue that I feel what I feel.

Why, then, am I deceived in regard to the relations between these two sticks, especially when they are not parallel? Why do I say, for instance, that the small stick is one third the size of the large, when, in reality, it is only one fourth? Why does not the im-

age—the sensation—correspond to its model, the object? It is because I *act* when I am drawing my conclusions. The error takes place in the operation of comparison, and my understanding in deciding intermixes its own mistakes with the truth of the sensations. The latter show only the two objects as they are.

There is another consideration which I am sure will appear striking when you reflect upon it. It is this, that if we were purely passive in the use of our senses, there would be no intercommunication between them. It would be impossible to know that the body we touch and the object we see are one and the same. Either we should never perceive any thing external to us, or whatever affects our five senses would seem to be five different things, and we should have no means of learning their identity.

Whatever name may be bestowed on that faculty of my mind which brings together

and compares my sensations — whether it be denoted by the term *attention*, *meditation*, *reflection*, or by any other appellation — it is not the less something in me, and not in outward objects; something which I alone call into exercise, though I do so only under the influence of the impression made upon me by outward objects. I cannot at will experience or avoid experiencing the sensation, but I *can* determine for myself whether I will examine it, when experienced, with more or less attention.

I am not, therefore, merely a sensitive and passive, but am likewise an active and intelligent being; and, whatever philosophers may maintain, I shall venture to aspire even to the honor of *thinking*. (I know only that truth is in things and not in the opinions which I may have of them; and that the less I mingle of what appertains to myself in the conclusions to which I come, the greater is the certainty of my approaching truth.)

Hence the rule which I have adopted, of being guided rather by my feelings than by my reason, is confirmed by reason itself.

Having, if I may so speak, made sure of myself, I begin to look abroad; and it is with a sort of shuddering that I find myself cast forth and lost in the vast universe in which I am placed—merged, as it were, in the immensity of beings, without knowing what they are, whether considered in reference to each other or to me. I study and observe them, and the first object which presents itself as a standard of comparison, is *myself*.

All that I discern by my senses is *matter;* and I deduce all the essential properties of matter from the sensible qualities by which I am enabled to discern it. I see it sometimes in motion, and sometimes at rest; whence I infer that neither motion nor rest is essential to it, but that motion (being an action) is the effect of a cause, and that rest is merely the absence of that cause. When, therefore, there is nothing which acts upon

matter it does not move ; and hence, from the very fact that rest or motion is indifferent to it, its natural state may be affirmed to be rest.

I perceive in bodies two kinds of motion, namely, that which is communicated from without, and that which is spontaneous or voluntary. In the former, the moving cause is foreign to the body moved. In the latter, the cause is in the body. I shall not draw from this the conclusion that the motion of a watch, for instance, is spontaneous ; for if the spring were not acted upon by some foreign force, it would have no tendency to recoil, and would not pull upon the chain. For the same reason, I cannot admit that the motion of fluids is spontaneous, nor even that such is the case with the phlogiston from which their fluidity proceeds.

You may ask whether the movements of animals are spontaneous. I reply that I am unable to say, but that analogy would lead to an affirmative conclusion. You will per-

haps inquire how I know that *any* motion is spontaneous. I can only answer that my knowledge on this point is derived from what I feel. I will that my arm should move, and it does move in obedience to my volition. Any attempt to destroy this feeling by argument is futile. There is no other species of evidence so strong; and I might with as much reason be told that I do not exist.

If there were no spontaneousness in the actions of men, nor in any thing which occurs on earth, we should be only the more embarrassed in endeavoring to ascertain the primary cause of every motion. For myself, I am so firmly convinced that matter in its natural state is at rest and has no power to act of itself, that when I see a body in motion, I suppose at once either that it is alive, or that the movement has been impressed upon it from without. I cannot concur in the idea that inorganic matter can, of itself, move or produce any action.

Yet the visible universe is matter—matter

in a state of dispersion and lifeless—destitute of union and organization, and destitute also of that community of feeling which distinguishes the parts of an animated body; for we, who are parts of the universe, do not feel ourselves affected by whatever affects any other part. This universe is in motion; and its movements are regular, uniform, subject to unchanging laws, and give no signs of that liberty by which the movements of men and animals are characterized. The world, then, is not a huge animal moving of its own accord. Its movements have some extraneous cause, and though I cannot perceive what it is, my internal convictions of its existence are so strong that I never look upon the sun apparently revolving round the earth, without thinking on the force which impels it; nor remember that the earth is turning on its axis, without imagining that I can see the hand by which it is kept in motion.

To assert that these movements are the

result of certain *general laws*, which, so far as I can discover, have no essential connection with matter, is to offer an explanation altogether unsatisfactory. These laws are not actual beings or substances, and must consequently have some source which is unknown to me.

By experience and observation we learn what the laws of motion are, and are thus enabled to calculate effects, but we derive from our knowledge of these no power of determining causes. These laws are totally inadequate to account for the system of the world and the movement of the universe. Descartes constructed the heavens and the earth with dice, but he did not succeed in setting them in motion, and could only make his centrifugal force operate by means of a rotary movement. Newton discovered the law of gravitation. But gravitation *alone* would speedily convert the universe into a stationary mass, and it was indispensable that the theory of a projectile force should

be added in order to explain the curves described by the heavenly bodies. Let Descartes inform us what law of physics compels his *vortices* to whirl; let Newton show the hand which launched the planets in tangents to their orbits!

The first causes of motion are not inherent in matter—the latter receives and imparts, but does not originate the former. The more I observe how the forces of nature act and react upon each other, the more clearly do I see that as we ascend through a long succession of effects resulting from preceding effects, we are always obliged to recognize some WILL as the first cause; for to suppose an infinite series of causes is tantamount to supposing no cause at all. In a word, every movement not the product of another movement can only arise from some spontaneous, voluntary act. The only act of inanimate bodies is movement; and since there can be, as I have already remarked, no real action without volition, the movements of these

bodies must be the consequence of volition. This is my first principle. I believe, then, that some WILL moves the universe and animates nature. This is my first *Doctrinal Point* or *Article of Faith.*

Am I asked, how a mere exercise of volition can occasion a physical and corporeal act? I do not know *in what way* this takes place, but I know from my own experience that it does take place. If I *will* to perform an act, I perform it; if I will that my body should move, it moves; but that an inanimate body should, of itself, either move or produce motion is incomprehensible, and no instance of such an occurrence can be cited. The will is known by its acts, not by its nature. I recognize it as the source of motion, but to conceive matter to be so, is evidently to conceive of an effect without a cause—which is the same as to have no conception whatever.

It is no more possible for me to understand in what manner my will occasions a move-

ment of my body, than it is to understand in what manner my sensations affect my soul. I know not for what reason one of these mysteries has been considered more susceptible of explanation than the other. To me, the means by which the two substances are united appear beyond comprehension, both when I am active and when I am passive. It is extremely singular that this very incomprehensibility has been made the ground on which the two substances have been confounded together; as if processes so dissimilar could be more easily accounted for when viewed as the work of a single agent, than when regarded as that of two.

The Doctrinal Point which I have just laid down is obscure, I admit. Yet it has a meaning, and involves nothing repugnant to reason and observation. Can as much be said for materialism? If motion were an essential property of matter, is it not obvious that the former would always be found in connection with the latter—would always

belong to it in an equal degree—would be always the same in each individual particle of it—would be incapable of passing from one body to another—would be incapable also of increase or diminution;—and that we should be unable to conceive of matter at rest? They who maintain that motion is not one of its *essential*, but only one of its *necessary* properties, endeavor to mislead by words which could be more easily refuted if they were not so deficient in sense. For, either movement proceeds from matter itself, in which case it is essential to matter; or it proceeds from a foreign cause, and in that case is only *necessary* so far forth as the moving cause acts upon matter; and we are thus carried back to the difficulty before stated.

General and abstract ideas have been the springs from which the greatest of human errors have flowed. The jargon of metaphysics has never led to the discovery of a single truth, and it has filled philosophy with

absurdities of which we are ashamed as soon as we strip them of their high-sounding names. When you are told, my friend, of a blind energy diffused through all nature, do the words convey to your mind any thing deserving to be called an idea? They who make use of such unmeaning terms as *universal force*, *necessary motion*, imagine they are uttering something extremely profound, while in reality their language signifies nothing. The idea of motion is merely that of transportation from one place to another. There can be no motion which does not tend in some direction, for an individual being cannot move in all directions at once. In what direction, then, does matter necessarily move? Has all matter, viewed as one body, a uniform movement, or has every atom its own peculiar movement? On the former supposition, the universe would constitute one solid and indivisible mass; on the latter, it would form only a scattered and incoherent fluid, and the union of any two atoms

would be forever impossible. In what direction does this common movement of matter take place—in a straight line or a circle, upward or downward, to the right or to the left? If every molecule has its own particular movement, what can be the causes of these directions and differences? If every atom or molecule only turned on its centre, nothing would ever quit its first position, and there would be no transmission of motion; and even the circular motion alluded to would, in fact, be motion in a fixed direction. To ascribe to matter movement *in the abstract*, is to employ language which has no intelligible signification; and to ascribe to it a determinate movement is to imply a cause by which the movement is determined. The more I multiply forces, the greater becomes the number of new causes which I have to account for, and I can find no common agent to direct them. So far am I from being able to imagine any order as the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, that

I cannot even imagine any collision between those atoms; and the chaos of the universe would be more incomprehensible than its harmony. That the mechanism of the world may be unintelligible to the human mind, I can well conceive; but he who undertakes to explain it, should speak so as to be understood.

If matter in motion indicates a *will*, matter moving in accordance with determinate laws indicates an *intelligence*. This is my second Article of Faith. Acting, comparing, and selecting are operations which mark an active and thinking being: then such a being exists. You will perhaps inquire where I behold him. Not only do I behold him in the revolving heavens, in the star which gives us light, and in my own frame, but also in the browsing sheep, in the flying bird, in the falling stone, in the leaf blown along by the wind.

I can judge of the order of the world, although I am ignorant of the end which it was intended to subserve, because for the pur-

pose of so judging, it is only necessary that I should compare the parts together, study their coöperation and relations, and observe how they harmonize with one another. I know not why the universe exists, but that does not prevent me from seeing how it is regulated, nor from perceiving the nice adaptation by which the beings that compose it afford aid to each other. I am in the situation of a man who should look for the first time in his life at the works of a watch. He would admire the workmanship, even though he were unacquainted with the use of the instrument and did not see the dial. I do not know, he would say, what all this is for, but it is evident that every part was made with reference to the other parts; I admire the mechanical skill displayed in the details, and I am very sure that all these wheels do not turn in such exact concert without some common object which I cannot ascertain by mere inspection.

Let us compare the particular ends, the

means by which those ends are attained, the relations subsisting between the different species of things, and then hearken to the dictates of our feelings, and what sound mind can refuse to yield to their testimony! Where are the eyes not blinded by prejudice, to which the visible order of the universe does not disclose a Supreme Intelligence! And to what sophistry are we not obliged to have recourse when we refuse to recognize the harmony of creation and the admirable adaptation of the structure of all the parts to the preservation of the other parts! Prate as much as you please of combinations and chances—what do you gain by out-talking me, so long as you cannot convince me? And how will you destroy the involuntary conviction which, in spite of all my efforts, rises within me, that you are in the wrong?

If organized bodies were fortuitously combined in a thousand ways before assuming a regular form; if, for example, there were stomachs, but no mouths, feet, but no heads,

hands without arms, and imperfect organs of all kinds, which perished, not from any external violence, but from mere absence of the means of self-conservation—how happens it that none of these shapeless productions offer themselves to our view at the present time? How happens it that nature has prescribed to herself laws by which she was not originally controlled? When in any undertaking the number of trials which may be made is so great as to counterbalance in some measure the difficulty of the attempt, so that one instance of success *may* take place, though accompanied by a multitude of failures—under such circumstances, I have no reason for astonishment if the event desired (which is possible, however improbable) should occur. Yet if I were told that the types of a printer* had been thrown on the

* Rousseau has borrowed this illustration from Cicero:

"Hic ego non mirer esse quemquam, qui sibi persuadeat, corpora quædam solida, atque individua, vi et gravitate ferri, mundumque effici ornatissimum, et pulcherrimum ex eorum

ground at random, and had, by sheer accident fallen in such an order as to give the exact words of Virgil's Æneid, the improbability would be such that I would not take the trouble of a single step for the purpose of obtaining ocular demonstration of the falsehood of the assertion. In vain might it

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corporum concursione fortuita? Hoc qui existimat fieri potuisse, non intelligo cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ literarum vel aureæ, vel quales libet, aliquo conjiciantur, posse ex his in terram excussis annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi possint effici: quod nescio an ne in uno quidem versu possit tantum valere fortuna."—CICERO, (*De Nat. Deorum*, Lib. ii, 37.)

"How can I fail to be astonished that any one should succeed in persuading himself that certain solid and indivisible bodies were put in motion by their own force and weight, and that the world, with all its splendor and beauty, was produced by the fortuitous concourse of these bodies? I see not why a man who believes the possibility of this, should not believe also that if a great number of copies of the twenty-one letters of the alphabet, made of gold or any other material, were to be thrown down together in any place, they might fall upon the ground in such a manner as to form the Annals of Ennius, complete. Yet I doubt whether accident could cause even a single verse to be formed in this way."

How nearly had Cicero approached to the invention of the art of printing! TRANSLATOR.

be said that I had not considered the number of trials which were made before the experiment proved successful. How many trials would be required to render such a combination probable! I can discover but one chance in its favor, while there would be an infinity of chances that the combination was not the effect of accident. Besides, the product of combinations and chances must be of the same nature as the elements on which they operate; so that organization and life cannot result from any mere union of atoms. A chemist, combining different ingredients in his crucible, cannot endow them with sensation and thought.*

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* Would any one have supposed that human extravagance could be carried to such a length? Amatus Lusitanus declares that he saw a little man an inch long, enclosed in a glass case, whom Julius Camillus, like a second Prometheus, had created by means of Alchymy. Paracelsus, in his treatise *De Natura Rerum*, informs us how these little men may be made, and maintains that the pigmies, fauns, satyrs, and nymphs were engendered by chemical processes.

In point of fact, I cannot discover that there is any thing wanting to prove the possibility of the truth of these asser-

I was surprised and almost scandalized in reading the work of Nieuwentyt. How could the man think of composing a book describing such of the wonders of nature as exhibit the wisdom of nature's Author? Had his book been as large as the world itself, the subject would not have been exhausted; and as soon as we descend to the details, the greatest wonder of all, viz., the harmony and coöperation of the whole, escapes. The mind of man cannot fathom even the mystery of the generation of living and organized bodies. The insurmountable barrier which nature has interposed between their different species, in order that they might not be confounded together, is irrefragable proof of her intentions. She has not contented herself with *establishing* order, but has resorted to

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tions, except some evidence to show that organized bodies are not affected by fire, and that the particles of which they are composed can retain their vitality in a reverberatory furnace!

effectual measures to secure it from all disturbance.

There is not in the universe a being that may not in some respects be viewed as the common centre around which all are arranged; so that all are reciprocally ends and means in regard to each other. The mind is confused and lost in this infinity of mutual relations, not one of which is itself confused or lost in the complexity of all. In opposition to all this harmony, how preposterous is the idea that matter is but a piece of mechanism blindly constructed, and fortuitously set in motion! They who deny the unity of design manifested in the relations between all the parts of the great whole, seek vainly to conceal their absurdities under the name of abstractions, co-ordinations, general principles, and under figurative expressions. Say what they may, I cannot conceive of so regularly arranged a system without at the same time conceiving of an

intelligence by which it is arranged. I cannot believe that matter, passive and lifeless as it is, is able to produce living and sentient beings; that blind fatality is able to produce intelligent beings; or that what is itself incapable of thought is able to produce thinking beings.

I believe, then, that the world is governed by a Will which is both powerful and wise. I see and feel that this is the case, and the knowledge that it is so is of great importance to me. But has the world existed from all eternity, or was it created? Is there one Principle of Things only? Or are there two or more? and if so, what is their nature? These are subjects of which I am entirely ignorant, and which do not in the least concern me. In proportion as the knowledge of them shall become interesting to me, I will endeavor to acquire it: till then, I shall abstain from the examination of idle questions which my pride may urge me to attempt to

solve, but which can have no influence on my conduct and are beyond the reach of my reason.)

Recollect that I am not *inculcating* my opinions, but am merely stating them. Whether matter be eternal or created, whether there be or be not a passive principle, it is certain that the whole is ONE, and announces one Intelligence; for I find nothing which is not in conformity with the same system, or which does not contribute to the same end, to wit, the maintenance of the whole in the established order. The being whose will and power are co-extensive, whose acts proceed only from himself, who moves the universe and governs all things—that Being, whatever be his nature, I call GOD. I attach to this name the attributes of intelligence, power, will (of which I have already spoken), and that of goodness, which is necessarily inferred from the preceding. But I have not on that account any additional knowledge of the being to whom I have

ascribed this attribute. He is equally above the sphere of my senses and my understanding. The more I meditate upon him the more I am confounded. I know with perfect certainty that he exists, and that he is self-existent; I know that my existence is subordinate to his; and that whatever comes within the scope of my observation is in the same condition. I perceive God every where in his works; I feel him within me; I see him all around me; but the moment I strive to contemplate him in himself—the moment I seek to learn where he is, what he is, what is his essence—he escapes my search, and my agitated mind can grasp nothing.

PART SECOND.

Satisfied of my own incapacity, I will never undertake to reason on the nature of God, except in so far as concerns his relations to me. Such reasonings are always rash, and a wise man will tremble when he at-

tempts them, and feel assured that he is not destined to master the subject: for not to think on the Deity at all is far less reprehensible than to think evil of him.

After discovering such of his attributes as enable me to conceive of his existence, I return to myself, and endeavor by all the means at my command to ascertain what rank I hold in the order of things which he controls. I find that, so far as regards my *species*, I occupy beyond question the highest grade, for by my will and the instruments by which I can execute it, I act on all the bodies which surround me, and subject myself to or withdraw myself from *their* action, more easily and forcibly that any of these can act upon me by mere physical impulsion; and with respect to intelligence, none but myself is capable of taking a survey of the whole. What being on earth, other than man, possesses the power of observing all the rest—of measuring, calculating, foreseeing their movements, their effects—and of

uniting, so to speak, the consciousness of the general existence with that of his own individual existence? What is there so ridiculous in believing that all is made for me, when I alone have the ability to comprehend that all is connected with me?

It is true, therefore, that man is the monarch of the earth on which he dwells, inasmuch as he not only subdues all animals and disposes of the elements by his industry (while no other being on the earth is capable of so much as understanding the processes to which he resorts for that purpose), but by the force of his intellect he makes the stars themselves, though unapproachable, his own. Show me any other animal that is acquainted with the use of fire, or admires the sun! What! Must I—endowed, as I am, with the faculty of observing and acquiring the knowledge of all existing things and their relations—I, who know what order, beauty, virtue signify—who have the power of contemplating the universe, of rising in thought

up to the hand that rules it, and of loving and practising goodness—must I compare myself to brutes? Abject spirit! it is thy pernicious philosophy which renders thee like them; or, rather, thou strivest in vain to debase thyself; thy genius testifies against thy principles; thy benevolent heart belies thy theories; and the very abuse of thy faculties proves their excellence in spite of thee!

For myself, as a plain and candid man—as one who has no system to advocate, whom no madness of party impels, and who aspires not to the honor of figuring as the leader of a sect—content with the situation which God has assigned me, I see nothing except him which seems superior to my own race; and if I were at liberty to select my place in the scale of being, what more could I choose than to be a man?

This reflection awakens within me gratitude rather than pride: for it was not my election which determined my place,

nor could any merit of mine have entitled me to it, inasmuch as it was fixed before I came into existence. How, then, can I see myself so favored without self-congratulation on the honorable rank I occupy, or without blessing the hand to which I am indebted for it? My first examination of my own nature gives rise in my heart to sentiments of thankfulness and grateful acknowledgment to the Creator of the race to which I belong, and from these sentiments proceeds my first offering of homage to the beneficent Divinity. I adore the Supreme Power, and am filled with tender emotions in view of the benefits which he confers. I need no one to teach me this religion; it is dictated by nature herself. Is it not a natural result of our love for ourselves that we should honor that which protects us, and love that which desires to promote our welfare?

But when, with the view of ascertaining my individual place among my species, I turn my attention to the various classes of

men and to the particular individuals who compose them, what then becomes of me? What a spectacle is here presented! Where is the order which I had before remarked? The picture offered to our gaze by nature exhibits only harmony and proportion: in that displayed by the human race, we witness nothing but confusion and disorder. The elements act in concert, but chaos reigns among men! The animals are happy; their king alone is wretched! Oh, Wisdom, where are thy laws? Oh, Providence, is it thus thou governest the world? Beneficent Being, where is thy power? I BEHOLD EVIL ON THE EARTH!

Would you have supposed it, my friend?—these gloomy reflections and seeming inconsistencies first suggested to my mind ideas respecting the soul, more sublime than any which my researches had before led me to form. While meditating on the nature of man, I imagined I could discover two distinct principles, one of which impels him to

the study of eternal truth, to the love of justice and moral beauty, elevating him to those regions of the intellectual world the contemplation of which constitutes the delight of the sage; while the other draws back his thoughts and prevents them from rising higher than himself, making him the slave of his senses and of the passions which are their ministers, and thus endeavoring to neutralize the operation of the opposing principle upon him. Finding myself assailed and urged in different directions by these two contending impulses, I said to myself, No; man is not *one:* I will and do not will; I feel myself enslaved and free at the same moment; I see the Right, I desire to act in accordance with it, and nevertheless I pursue the Wrong; I am active when I listen to my reason, passive when governed by my passions; and my greatest misfortune, when I have yielded to the latter, is the consciousness that I might have resisted them.

My young friend, you may give me your

confidence; whatever I say shall at least be said in sincerity. If conscience is but the creature of our prejudices, I am of course in error, and there is nothing from which the principles of morality can be demonstrated. But if to be more solicitous for ourselves than for aught else be our natural disposition, and if, nevertheless, the elementary notions of justice are innate in the human heart; when they who contend that the constitution of man is simple and uncompounded shall have reconciled these contradictions, I will admit that we are formed of but one substance.

Observe that by the word *substance* I mean, in general, a being possessing some primary quality, without reference to any special or secondary modification of it. If, therefore, all the primary qualities known to us can be combined in a single being, we are at liberty to conclude that there is but one substance; but if there are qualities incompatible with each other, there must be

as many different substances as there are cases in which such incompatibility exists. This is a point on which you should reflect. For myself, whatever Locke may maintain, I have only to know that matter is susceptible of extension and division, to be convinced that it is not capable of thought; and though a philosopher should come to me and affirm that trees feel and rocks think, and should embarrass me by the subtlety of his arguments, yet I should look upon him only as a disingenuous sophist who would rather ascribe sensation to stones than allow that man has a soul.

Suppose a deaf man were to deny the reality of sounds, because his own ear had never been affected by them. Suppose I should place before him a stringed instrument of music, and the strings of another instrument in unison with the former, but concealed from sight, should be made to vibrate. I might say to the deaf man, who would see the tremulous movement of the string, "It

is the sound which produces that." "Not at all," he would perhaps reply; "the cause of the string's vibration is in itself; such vibrations are common to all bodies." "Show me, then," I would say, "other bodies in which the vibration takes place, or, at all events, point out the cause of it in this string." "I cannot," he might answer, "but it does not follow that because I do not understand how it is that the string vibrates, I must seek to explain the difficulty by recurring to your sounds, of which I have not the least conception. That would be explaining an obscure effect by a cause still more obscure. Either render your sounds sensible to me, or I shall say that they do not exist."

The more I reflect on thought itself, and on the constitution of the human mind, the more does the reasoning of the materialists seem to me to resemble that of the deaf man. They are, in truth, deaf to that inward voice which cries in tones which it is difficult to leave unheeded—"Machines do not think:

there is no motion nor any form by which reflection is generated. There is something within thee that strives to break the bonds by which it is confined: space itself cannot contain thee; the universe is too contracted for thee; thy sentiments, thy desires, thy restlessness, thy very pride, proceed from another principle than that diminutive body in which thou feelest thyself imprisoned."

No merely material being is active of itself. I am so. It is in vain to deny this. I know it by my own feelings, which have more weight with me than any opposing arguments. I have a body which acts upon other bodies and is acted upon by them. This reciprocal action is not a matter of doubt. But my will is independent of my senses; I can comply or resist, I can yield to or triumph over them; and am perfectly aware when I have acted in accordance with my will, and when in obedience to my passions. I am always capable of exercising my will, but not always of carrying it into execution.

When I give way to temptation, I act under the influence of external objects; when I reproach myself with my weakness, I listen to my will. The vices into which I fall render me a slave; my remorse for them proves that I am free. The consciousness of my freedom is absent only when I cease to be virtuous, and stifle the voice of the soul which cries out against the propensities of the body.

All my knowledge of volition is derived from my own; and I am equally ignorant of the nature of the understanding. If it be asked what is the cause which determines my will, I reply by inquiring, what is the cause which determines my judgment?—for it is plain that these two causes are in fact the same. If we are satisfied that man is active in judging, that his understanding is nothing else than the power of comparing and deciding, we shall see that his free will is a faculty similar to this, or derived from it. His choice as to what is good, is like his judg-

ment as to what is true; when his conclusions are false, his choice is bad. What then is the cause which determines his will? It is his judgment. And what is the cause which determines his judgment? It is his faculty of intelligence—his *power* of judging. The determining cause is in himself. Farther than this, my knowledge does not extend.

Doubtless I am not free not to will my own happiness; I am not free to will my own misery; but my freedom of will consists in the very fact that I can will only what is for my own advantage, or what appears to me to be so; and that no cause foreign to myself determines what I must will. Does it follow that I am not my own master, because I cannot be other than what I am? The principle of every action is the will of a free being. We can go no farther back than this. In this point of view, necessity, not free agency, is a word without meaning. To imagine that there is any act or effect which is not the result of an active principle, is to

imagine effects without a cause, and to reason in a fallacious circle. Either there is no original impulse, or every original impulse is without any anterior cause; so that there is no real will except such as is free. Man, then, is a free agent, and, as such, animated with an immaterial substance. This is my third Article of Faith. From these first three, you can readily deduce all the others without my continuing to number them.

If man is active and free, he acts of himself. Nothing that he does of his own free will can be considered as entering into the scheme ordained by Providence, nor can the latter be held responsible for it. The Creator does not will the evil which man produces by abusing his liberty; but he does not prevent man from abusing it, whether because in his eyes the evil which so weak a being can do is very trifling in amount, or because it was not possible to deprive us of our power to do evil without impairing our free agency,

and thus occasioning greater evil by degrading our nature. He made us free, not that we might do evil, but that we might choose what is good. He has enabled us so to choose, if we rightly employ the faculties he has given us; but has so limited our power that our abuse of our freedom cannot disturb the general harmony. The evil which men do recoils upon themselves without effecting the least change in the system of the universe, and without interfering with the continued preservation of the human race, notwithstanding the destructive tendencies of man's own acts. To murmur because God does not prevent us from doing evil, is to murmur because he conferred on us an exalted nature; because he attached to our actions the moral qualities by which they are ennobled; because he afforded us the opportunity of exhibiting our virtue. The highest enjoyment is self-approbation; and it is to deserve that approbation that we are

placed on the earth as free agents, and subjected to the temptations of our passions and the restraints of conscience.

What more could be done for us by Omnipotence itself? Would it have been possible to compose our nature of contradictions, and bestow the reward of virtuous conduct upon those who had it not in their power to act viciously? What! To prevent man from being wicked, ought he to have received from the Creator instinct alone, and been made a mere animal? No, God of my soul! Never will I reproach thee that thou hast created me in thine own image, to the end that I might be free, good, and happy, like thyself!

It is the abuse of our faculties which renders us unhappy and wicked. Our disappointments, cares and sorrows proceed from ourselves. Moral evil is undeniably our work; and physical evil would be nothing but for our vices, without which we should be insensible to it. Is it not for our preser-

vation that nature makes us feel our wants? Is not bodily pain a sign that the machine is out of order, and a warning to direct our attention to the circumstance? As for death —do not the wicked embitter their lives and ours? Who would desire to live forever? Death is the remedy for the ills we bring upon ourselves; nature will not permit that our sufferings should be without end. How few are the evils to which man is subject so long as he retains his primitive simplicity! He lives almost without diseases, as well as without passions, and, in general, neither foresees his death nor feels it when it comes. When he does feel it, his misery renders it an object of desire; and then it ceases to be an evil. Were we but content to be what we are, we should have no reason to deplore our fate; but in seeking for imaginary blessings, we encounter a thousand real ills. He who cannot endure a little pain must expect to suffer much. When we have ruined our constitutions by a dissipated life, we en-

deavor to restore them by medicines. To the present evil we add that which we fear in the future. Our anticipations of death both heighten its terrors and accelerate its approach. The more we strive to escape it, the more sensibly it affects us; and we die of apprehension during our whole lives, complaining all the while of nature, on account of the evils we have drawn upon ourselves by violating her precepts.

Search not, O man, for the author of evil. Thou art thyself that author. There is no evil in existence save such as thou dost cause or suffer, and both originate with thee. General evil can exist only in disorder, and I behold invariable order in the system of the world. Particular evil exists only in the feelings of the being that suffers; and these feelings man derives from himself and not from nature. Pain has little hold upon any one who reflects but little, and has, in consequence, neither memory nor foresight.

Take away our pernicious civilization, our errors, and our vices—take away the work of man, and all is well.

Where all is well, nothing is unjust. Justice is inseparable from goodness. Now goodness is the necessary result of unbounded power conjoined with that self-love which is essential to every being endowed with consciousness. He to whom all things are possible, extends, as it were, his own existence with that of the beings he creates. His power is continually exerted in producing and upholding. It does not operate on what does not exist. God is not the God of the dead. He could not be a destructive or malevolent being without injuring himself. He whose power is unlimited cannot *will* aught but what is good. Hence the being who is supremely good because he is supremely powerful, must likewise be supremely just. Otherwise, he would be made up of inconsistencies; for the love of order, out

of which order first arose, is what we call *goodness;* and the love of order, by which order is maintained, is what we call *justice.*

God, it is sometimes said, owes nothing to his creatures. In my opinion, he owes them all that he promised by bringing them into existence. To give them the idea of a good, and make them feel the want of it, was to promise it to them. The more I enter into myself—the more I learn by my investigations into my own nature—the more distinctly do I trace these words inscribed upon my soul: *Be just, and thou shalt be happy.* Such, however, I do not find to be the case when I examine the present state of things: the bad prosper, and the good are oppressed. Observe, moreover, how indignant we are when our expectations of happiness as the result of virtuous conduct are disappointed. Conscience rises up and murmurs against its Creator; it groans and cries, *Thou hast deceived me!*

"*I have deceived thee,* rash man? Who

has thus told thee? Is thy soul annihilated? Hast thou ceased to exist? O, Brutus! O, my son! Sully not thy noble life by a voluntary death! Cast not away thy hope and glory with thy body on the field of Philippi! Why sayest thou, *Virtue is but a name*,* when thou art on the point of enjoying the recompense of thine? Dost thou imagine thou art about to die? No; thou art about to live; and then it is that I will perform all that I have promised thee.'

One would suppose from the complaints of impatient mortals, that God owed them the reward before they had done any thing to deserve it, and that he was bound to pay them for their virtue in advance. Ah! let us first be good, and happiness will come afterward. Let us not demand the prize

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* The exclamation of Brutus a few moments before his death. Florus quotes the sentiment with approbation:

Quam verum est quod moriens efflavit, "*non in re, sed in verbo tantum, esse virtutem!*"—(Flor. iv., 7.)

Translator.

before we have vanquished, nor the wages before we have labored. It is not in the lists, said Plutarch, that the victors in our sacred games are crowned; it is after they have passed over the course.

If the soul be immaterial, it may survive the body; and if it survives, the ways of Providence are justified. Had I no other proof of the immateriality of the soul than the prosperity of the wicked and the sorrows of the good in this world, that alone would be sufficient to remove all doubt from my mind. Such a jarring discord in the universal harmony would incite me to search for some explanation. I should say to myself, "All is not over with us when life terminates; all is set right at our death." I might, indeed, be somewhat at a loss when I asked myself what becomes of man when every part of him that is discoverable by our senses is destroyed. To me, this question is relieved of all its difficulty as soon as I admit that he is composed of two substances. As

I can perceive nothing except by my senses during my corporeal life, it is not strange that what makes no impression upon them escapes my observation. When the union of the soul and body is broken up, I can conceive that the one may dissolve and the other be preserved. Why should the destruction of one involve that of the other? On the contrary, their natures being so different, they were, while together, in a state of constrained union; and when the connection ceases, they both return to their natural condition; whereby the active and living recovers all the vigor which it expended in moving the passive and dead substance. Alas! My vicious inclinations make me but too well aware that man is but half alive during his earthly existence, and that the life of the soul does but commence at the death of the body.

But what is that life? Is the soul immortal by its very nature? I know not. My bounded understanding can grasp noth-

ing that is unbounded. All that is called infinite is above my comprehension. What can I affirm or deny, or in what way can I reason respecting that of which I understand nothing? I believe that the soul outlives the body long enough for all to be set right, but who can assert that this is forever? Still, I can conceive of the wearing out and destruction of the body by the separation of its component parts; but I cannot conceive of such a destruction of the thinking entity; and as I cannot imagine how it can die, I presume that it does not. As this presumption is, moreover, a consoling one, and has nothing unreasonable in it, why should I hesitate to adopt it?

I feel my soul; I recognize it both by my feelings and my thoughts. I know that it exists, but know not what is its essence. I cannot reason in relation to ideas which I do not possess. I am well assured of one thing, which is, that our individual identity is kept up only by the memory; and that to be in

reality the same that I have been, I must *remember* that I have been. Now, after my death, I cannot recollect what I have been during my life without recalling at the same time what I have felt, and, consequently, what I have done; and I have no doubt that the remembrance of this will one day constitute the felicity of the good and the torment of the bad. On earth, a thousand ardent passions deaden conscience and turn away remorse. The humiliations and indignities which the practice of virtue draws down upon us, prevent us from discerning all its charms. But when, freed from the illusions of our bodies and senses, we shall enjoy the contemplation of the Supreme Being and of the eternal truths of which he is the source—when the beauty of order shall strike every faculty of our souls, and we shall employ ourselves exclusively in comparing what we have with what we *ought* to have done—then will the voice of conscience resume its authoritative tone—

then will feelings of the highest intensity—the pure delight which flows from satisfaction with ourselves, and the bitter regret arising from the consciousness of self-degradation—mark the condition which each shall have prepared for himself. Ask not, my friend, if other sources of pleasure or pain will be found. I know not; and that to which I have adverted is sufficient to console me for the miseries of this life and lead me to hope for another. (I do not assert that the virtuous will be rewarded; for what other good can a virtuous being expect than the privilege of existing in accordance with its nature?) But I do affirm that they will be happy; because their Maker, the fountain of all justice, has endowed them with sensibility, and did not create them that they might suffer; and, not having abused their free agency while on earth, they will not have been prevented by any fault of their own from fulfilling their destiny; and as their life in this world is one of suffering,

they will be indemnified in the next. This conviction is based not so much on my opinion of man's merit, as on the idea which I entertain of goodness as inseparable from the divine essence. I merely suppose the laws of order to be observed, and God to be consistent with himself.

Do not inquire of me whether the torments of the wicked will be eternal, or whether their condemnation to everlasting suffering be compatible with the goodness of the Author of their being. Of this, too, I know nothing; and I have not the idle curiosity which prompts men to meddle with useless questions. What is it to me what will become of the wicked? I take little interest in their fate. Still, I can hardly believe they will be doomed to endless agony. Supreme Justice avenges itself in this life. You, O nations, and your errors are its ministers! The calamities which you draw upon yourselves by your misdeeds are the instruments of punishment it employs! In your own

insatiable hearts, devoured by envy, avarice, and ambition—in the midst of your illusive prosperity, the avenging passions chastise your crimes! What need of seeking for a hell in another life? In *this* it is found in the breasts of the wicked.

Where our mortal wants as well as our mad desires cease, there our passions and our crimes must likewise cease. What depraved act could disembodied spirits commit? Having need of nothing, why should they be wicked? If they are destitute of our gross senses, and all their happiness is derived from the contemplation of what exists, they can *will* nothing but what is good; and he who is no longer wicked cannot be forever miserable: so, at least, I am inclined to believe, though I have not taken the trouble to form a decided opinion. O, merciful and bounteous Being, whatever thy decrees may be, I adore them! If thou inflictest eternal punishment upon the wicked, far be it from my weak reason to impugn thy justice; but

if, in time, the remorse of these unhappy beings passes away—if their pangs have an end, and the same tranquillity awaits us all alike—for this I praise thee! Are not the wicked my brethren? How often have I been tempted to become like them? If, delivered from their misery, they lose also the malignity by which it is accompanied;—if they are destined to be happy as well as myself, their happiness, far from exciting jealousy in me, will but augment my own.

Thus, by contemplating God in his works, and studying him in such of his attributes as it was important for me to know, I gradually enlarged and multiplied my ideas of that infinite Being, which were before imperfect and narrow. But if these ideas have become more exalted and expanded, they are also more disproportioned to the weakness of the human mind. As I approach in spirit the eternal Source of Light, his brightness dazzles and confuses me, and I am forced to lay aside all those habits of thought derived

from meditation on earthly things, which before assisted me in my conceptions of him. Here God is no longer corporeal and cognizable by my senses; the Supreme Intelligence that governs the world is no longer the world itself; in vain do I strain and weary my faculties in the effort to comprehend his incomprehensible essence. When I remember that it is this which imparts life and activity to the living and active substance that directs the movements of animated bodies, and hear it remarked that my soul is spiritual and that God is a spirit, I feel indignant at such a disparaging view of the divine essence. As if God and my soul were of the same nature! As if God were not the only independent being; the only one that really acts, feels, thinks, wills, of himself; and the one from whom we derive thought, feeling, activity, will, free agency, existence! We are free agents only because he has willed that we should be such; and his mysterious substance is to our souls

what our souls are to our bodies. I know not whether he *created* matter, bodies, spirits, and the universe. The idea of *creation* confounds me and surpasses my comprehension. Yet, as far as I am capable of understanding the subject, I believe that he did execute the work of creation, and I know that he gave form to the world and all that IS; that he constituted and arranged all.

God is, no doubt, eternal; but can my mind take in the idea of eternity? Why put me off with words signifying nothing? I can understand that he *was* before any thing else; and that he *will be* as long as any thing else subsists; and longer still, if all other things should ever come to an end. That a being with whose nature I am unacquainted, should communicate existence to other beings, is merely obscure and incomprehensible; but that such a being and nonentity should be converted into each other without any external cause, is a palpable contradiction, a manifest absurdity.

God is intelligent; but how? Man is intelligent when he reasons; and the Supreme Intelligence is exempt from the necessity of reasoning. To it there are no such things as premises and conclusions—there is no such thing as a proposition even. It operates by pure intuition. It perceives alike all that *is* and all that can be; to it, all truths are but a single idea, as all places are but a point, and all times but one moment.

Human power works by means; the divine power works by itself. God *can* because he *wills;* his will is his power.

God is good: nothing is plainer. But goodness in man is the love of his fellows; and this quality in God is the love of order; for it is order that sustains the universe and binds every part to the whole.

I am convinced that God is just. This is a result of his goodness. The injustice of men is their own work, not his. The moral disorder which the philosophers consider as

an argument against a superintending Providence is to me a proof of his existence. But the justice of man consists in giving to all their due; and the justice of God, in requiring from all an account of what he has committed to their care.

It is by drawing necessary inferences, and by the right use of my reason, that I succeed in discovering, one after another, all these attributes, of which I had originally no idea. Yet I assert that they exist without understanding them; which is equivalent to making no assertion. In vain do I say, "*God is thus or thus; I feel it; I can prove it.*" I am no better able than before to conceive *how* God *can be* thus.

In short, the more I strive to contemplate his infinite essence, the less do I understand it. He exists, however, and that is sufficient. The less I comprehend him, the more I adore him. I humble myself, and exclaim, "Being of beings, I *am* because thou art! To meditate unceasingly upon thee is to rise to the

source whence I sprung. The most appropriate use I can make of my reason is to deem myself as naught in thy presence: it is rapture to my soul, it is the delight of my weakness, to feel myself overwhelmed by thy greatness!"

END OF EXTRACTS FROM ROUSSEAU, AND OF THE WORK.

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